

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4655
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 3381

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ZA, BC, RH, UR
SUBJ: USSR STANDS READY TO SUPPORT BOTSWANA

SUMMARY: SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO ZAMBIA AND BOTSWANA
DEC 17 TOLD THE PRESS IN LUSAKA THAT THE USSR WAS PREPARED,
IF REQUESTED, TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO BOTSWANA TO REPEL
RHODESIAN INTRUDERS. SOLODOVNIKOV SAID THE USSR IS TRAINING
CADRE FROM THE AFRICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL (ZIMBABWE) THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA, AND SWAPO.
WESTERN IMPERIALISTS ARE TRYING TO UNDERMIND THE AFRICANS'
LEGITIMATE STRUGGLE FOR MAJORITY RULE AND SAVE THZ WHITE
REGIME IN RHODESIA. IF GENEVA TALKS FAIL, USSR
IS PREPARED TO BACK THE ARMED STRUGGLE. SOLODOVNIKOV
DENIED THAT THE USSR HAD ANY INTEREST IN BASES IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA AND MAINTAINED HIS COUNTRY HAD NO BASES IN AFRICA,
"EVEN IN ANGOLA." USSR BACKS PATRIOTIC FRONT AND URGES
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ALL RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS TO UNITE IN THE COMMON
STRUGGLE. END SUMMARY.

1. SOLODOVNIKOV'S REMARKS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA WERE ADDRESSED
TO THE PRESS ASSEMBLED AT HIS EMBASSY. TV COVERAGE WAS
ARRANGED AND HIS PRESS CONFERENCE WAS RUN ON ZAMBIAN

RV DEC 17.

2. BOTSWANA: SOLODOVNIKOV SAID THAT THE USSR IS READY TO GIVE BOTSWANA MILITARY HELP TO REPULSE RHODESIAN TROOPS WHICH VIOLATE ITS TERRITORY. "IF THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT APPROACHES US FOR HELP, WE SHALL DEFINITELY GIVE THEM HELP BECAUSE THE SOVIET UNION'S STAND ON SOUTHER AFRICA IS CLEAR -- TO HELP PEOPLE THERE LIVE IN PEACE."

3. GENEVA: WESTERN IMPERIALISTS ARE TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE AFRICANS LEGITIMATE STRUGGLE FOR MAJORITY RULE. THE NATIONALIST LEADERS HAD GONE TO GENEVA TO REACH A SETTLEMENT FOR GENUINE INDEPENDENCE WHILE THE SMITH REGIME WENT THERE FOR POLITICAL MANEUVERS. THE WESTERN IMPERIALISTS ARE TRYING TO SAVE THE MINORITY REGIME IN RHODESIA. "IF THE RACISTS ARE NOT READY TO GIVE INDEPENDENCE TO THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE, THEN THE SOVIET UNION WILL SUPPORT THE ARMED STRUGGLE UNTIL THERE IS MAJORITY RULE."

4. THE NATIONALISTS: SOLODOVNIKOV SAID THAT THE USSR SUPPORTED NKOMO AND MUGABE BECAUSE THEIR PATRIOTIC FRONT WAS AIMED AT INTENSIFYING THE ARMED STRUGGLE IF THE GENEVA TALKS FAIL. HE URGED THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO PATCH UP THEIR DIFFERENCES IN ORDER TO SPEED UP THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN THEIR COUNTRY.

5. SOVIET TRAINING: THE AMBASSADOR CONFIRMED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS TRAINING PERSONNEL AND MILITARY CADRE FROM THE ANC (SOUTH AFRICA), THE ANC (ZIMBABWE) AND CONFIDENTIAL

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SWAPO.

6. SOVIET BASES: THERE ARE NO SOVIET BASES IN AFRICA, SAID SOLODOVNIKOV, NOT EVEN IN ANGOLA "WHICH WE HELPED TO ATTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE." THE USSR HAS NO INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING BASES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WHEN THE COUNTRIES IN THAT REGION ARE INDEPENDENT.

7. EMBASSY DOES NOT RECOMMEND PUBLIC REJOINDER. HOWEVER, TO STATE HOUSE AND PRIVATELY TO PRESS WE PLAN TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. ACTIVE EFFORTS OF GROUP OF NATIONS, INCLUDING US IS TO WORK WITH PRES KAUNDA AND FRONTLINE COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE MAJORITY RULE AND INDEPENDENCE VIA PEACEFUL MEANS. THE VISITS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AND OTHERS AND OUR LARGE ECONOMIC AID PROGRAM ARE EVIDENCE OF THIS. OUR INTEREST IS IN DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY OF ALL INHABITANTS OF REGION.

B. THE OTHER GROUP OF NATIONS HAVE MADE THEMSELVES CONSPICUOUS BY THE ABSENCE OF ANY CONTRIBUTION FROM THEM TO THIS EFFORT. ON THE CONTRARY THEIR WORDS AND ACTIONS HAVE BEEN EXCLUSIVELY DEVOTED TOWARDS FACILITATING AND ENCOURAGING CONFLICT IN THE REGION.

COMMENT: IT IS RARE IN ZAMBIA FOR AN AMBASSADOR TO CALL A PRESS CONFERENCE IN ORDER TO MAKE A MAJOR POLICY STATEMENT LIKE THE ONE MADE BY SOLODOVNIKOV. HIS COMMENTS MAY HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AT ENCOURAGING POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN BOTSWANA TO BRING PRESSURE ON KHAMA TO ACCEPT SOVIET MILITARY AID. IN PROCESS HOWEVER SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS ON RHODESIA WENT WELL BEYOND THIS. THE SOVIETS MAY CALCULATE THAT THE CHANCES FOR A NEGOTIATED RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT, NOW THAT THE GENEVA TALKS HAVE ADJOURNED ARE SMALL, AND THAT NOW IS THE TIME FOR THEM TO DECLARE THEIR UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARMED STRUGGLE. IF SO WE BELIEVE THEY HAVE MISJUDGED THEIR ZAMBIAN AUDIENCE. PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND HIS SPECIAL
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ASSISTANT, MARK CHONA, RECOGNIZE THE GREAT NEED FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO RHODESIA. THEY MAY VIEW SOLODOVNIKOV'S COMMENTS AS ENCOURAGING THE ARMED STRUGGLE THEY SEEK TO AVOID. LOW

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